

43. Western Europe 1

= the British Isles (UK, IRL), B, NL, LUX, F, D, CH

= economically the most developed part in Europe, within European Union too (Golden Triangle and Hot Banana region)

United Kingdom

Capital: London

Population: 60 million

GDP/capita (2001): 23,000\$

= historical regions: *England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland*



- variety of landscapes: mountains (Grampian mts., Cambrian mts.) vs. marshlands
- ¾ of land is used for farming, great variety of grown crops ⇔ climate and soil type
- huge influence on world affairs, 19th century – industrial revolution (steam engine, large-scale factory production), nowadays reliant on *service industries* (banking, insurance)
- London = 1 of the world's leading centres of culture, finance and tourism
- *multicultural society* ⇔ former colonies in Africa, West Indies and Indian subcontinent
- URB = 89% ⇔ commuting from city suburbs
- tourism very developed (theatres, museums, historic buildings, restaurants, hotels, etc.)
- Protestants (the Church of England – Anglican) => tension with Catholics (Northern Ireland – Belfast)
- other large cities: Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool, York, Newcastle upon Tyne, Edinburgh, Glasgow

Ireland

Capital: Dublin

Population: 3.9 million

GDP/capita (2001): 22,000\$

= *Emerald Isle* ⇔ mild and wet climate =>

- ⇒ lush green grass – excellent grazing land for cattle => dairy and beef farming
- ⇒ major tourist destination
- independent since 1922
- traditional Catholic country – influences on the social life vs. abortions and birth control
- scarce natural resources => majority of population employed in agriculture
- dramatic growth in light industry and tourism = recent economic success
- other large cities: Cork, Galway

Benelux countries

= much of their land is flat and low-lying

= economic union since 1948 = free flow of goods between the three countries

= the most densely populated countries + high standard of living

= coal mining was replaced by modern manufacturing industries and banking + administration

= rivers: Rhine, Moselle, Meuse = means of transportation

Netherlands

Capital: Amsterdam

Population: 16 million

GDP/capita (2001): 25,000\$

= 16th + 17th century = Dutch merchants and sailors traded in spices and gold



- export = 1/2 of the country's income
- *polders* (1/3 of the land) + drainage => flat country => cycling is widespread
- intensive farming of salad vegetables (tomatoes and lettuce), potatoes, tulips, cheese and dairy production
- largest lake: IJsselmeer
- *tolerant and liberal country* (euthanasia, abortions, homosexual marriages, acceptance of soft drugs) = highly multicultural ⇔ Surinam + SE Asian migrants (1/5 of a city pop.)
- huge and dense grid of artificial *canals* (since the 17th century)
- *Amsterdam* = world centre for diamond polishing and processing
- *Rotterdam* = 1 of the world's largest harbours
- other large cities: Hague, Utrecht, Haarlem Groningen

Belgium

Capital: Brussels

Population: 11 million

GDP/capita (2001): 25,000\$

= independence from Dutch rulers since 1830

= divide into 2 parts by the Meuse river =>

- ⇒ north part = flat, fertile plains stretching to the coast, traditional textile industry – Bruges
- ⇒ south part = Ardennes mts. With poor soils
- manufacture of chemicals, electrical equipment, 2/3 of Belgians employed in services
- Dutch (N – Fleming), French (S - Walloon) and German (E) language is spoken



Luxembourg

Capital: Luxembourg

Population: 450,000

GDP/capita (2001): 41,000\$

= the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg is bounded by D, F, B

= the highest standard of living in Europe ⇔ centre of international finance and tax haven

- heavy industry + (quaternary) services
- European Court of Justice
- high incomes from tourism



Keywords

the British Isles, marshland, multicultural society, polders, intensive farming, duchy,